

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
PAGE ONE LAND EXCHANGE
GLEN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA**

Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA) was established in 1972 “in order to provide for public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of Lake Powell and lands adjacent thereto in the states of Arizona and Utah and to preserve scenic, scientific, and historic features contributing to public enjoyment of the area” (PL 92–593). The legislation permits the Secretary of Interior to acquire lands and interests in lands by donation, purchase or exchange. In 2003 Congress authorized the National Park Service (NPS) to exchange lands to protect the scenic values of the recreation area (PL 108–43). An environmental assessment was completed to insure that impacts to recreation area resources were analyzed and that the exchange would result in protection of the recreation area purpose and its values.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE OR PROPOSED ACTION

The NPS would exchange 312.5 acres of recreation area land for 122.93 acres of privately-owned land abutting the recreation area as authorized in PL 108–43. The recreation area proposes to acquire lands in fee of approximately 122.93 acres located in the northeast portion of Section 32, Township 43 South, Range 3 East, Salt Lake Base and Meridian lying east of US Highway 89 and adjacent to the recreation area. In exchange for this land, the recreation area will convey approximately 312.5 acres in Section 5, Township 44 South, Range 3 East, both parcels of land are in Kane County, Utah. Upon completion of the exchange, the boundary of Glen Canyon NRA will be revised to add the parcel of approximately 122.93 acres and to exclude the parcel of approximately 312.5 acres. The parties involved in this exchange have indicated a desire to proceed with the exchange, and the exchange and boundary adjustments have been authorized by appropriate Congressional legislation (PL 108–43).

Completion of the proposed land exchange would protect the scenic values in the viewshed east of Highway 89, fulfilling the purpose of the recreation area. Completion of the exchange would result in development on the exchanged recreation parcel and adjacent private lands. The exchange does not require any mitigating measures.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED – NO ACTION

Under the No Action alternative, the NPS would retain ownership of existing lands in Glen Canyon NRA which can only be accessed by the public from Highway 89 across gated private property or from BLM land to the west of the recreation area. Therefore, there is little or no public day use and there is no

overnight camping. Although open to grazing, use by livestock has been limited due to its topographic isolation and lack of permanent water.

No Action or failure to make this land exchange has a high probability that the adjacent private land, including the exchange parcel east of Highway 89, will be developed which will result in the loss of the existing scenic value. This threatened loss would continue as long as the land is in private ownership.

WHY THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

As defined in 40 CFR §1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse

Minor adverse impacts of the preferred alternative include negligible, long-term, site specific impacts to soils and geology. No effects to listed species, wildlife, cultural, or scenic resources were identified for the preferred alternative.

Degree of effect on public health or safety

There were no identified impacts of the preferred alternative on public health or safety.

Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas

As described in the environmental assessment, no effects to natural or cultural resources were identified for the preferred alternative. There are no prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas affected.

Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial

No effects of the preferred alternative are likely to be highly controversial.

Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks

No highly uncertain or unique or unknown risks were identified.

Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration

Although this is the first land exchange in the recreation area the preferred alternative is authorized both in the enabling legislation and by PL 108-43. Therefore, it does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts

The preferred alternative is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulative significant impacts.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources

The Utah State Historic Preservation Officer has concurred with the NPS determination that the preferred alternative will not have an effect on districts, sites, highways structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Place or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat

The preferred alternative will not adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or critical habitat.

Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, state, or local environmental protection law

The preferred alternative does not threaten a violation of Federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

Impairment

In addition to reviewing the list of significant criteria, the NPS has determined that implementation of the preferred alternative will not constitute an impairment to Glen Canyon NRA's resources and values. This conclusion is based on a thorough analysis of the environmental impacts described in Page One Land Exchange/Environmental Assessment, the public comment received, relevant scientific studies, and the professional judgment of the decision-maker guided by the direction in NPS Management Policies (December 27, 2000). Although the project has minor negative impacts, the result of action taken to preserve scenic values results in benefits to recreation area resources and values, opportunities for their enjoyment, and it does not result in their impairment.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Alternatives considered respond to the issues and concerns identified in hearings before Congress, internal scoping by recreation area managers and natural and cultural staff specialists, meetings with the owner of the private parcel, staff of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, and representatives of the Utah State Institutional Trust Lands Administration.

Affiliated tribes were consulted. Two alternatives were presented to the public for review: the No-action Alternative and the Proposed Action Alternative.

The environmental assessment was made available for public review and comment during a 30-day period ending February 13, 2004. There was one public comment during the public review which was in support of the Proposed Action Alternative.

CONCLUSION

The preferred alternative does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). The preferred alternative will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Negative environmental impacts that could occur are minor or moderate in intensity. There are no significant impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, sites or districts listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or other unique characteristics of the region. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an EIS is not required for this project and thus will not be prepared.

Recommended by:

John P. Ritenour
Chief, Resource Management

Date

Recommended by:

Kitty L. Roberts
Superintendent
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Date

Approved:

Intermountain Regional Director

Date